

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6466

As Passed Senate, February 19, 2008

Title: An act relating to instruction in Spanish and Chinese languages.

Brief Description: Creating a task force to study teaching Spanish and Chinese in public schools.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Roach, Tom, Rasmussen, McAuliffe, Hobbs, Stevens, Delvin, Shin and Carrell).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/4/08, 2/7/08 [DPS-WM].

Ways & Means: 2/11/08, 2/12/08 [DPS(EDU)].

Passed Senate: 2/19/08, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6466 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Minority Member; Eide, Hobbs, Holmquist, McDermott, Oemig and Rasmussen.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6466 as recommended by Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Hatfield, Hobbs, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Rasmussen, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: Currently, there is no requirement for school districts to provide instruction in languages other than English in elementary schools. Under the State Board of Education minimum state graduation requirements, high school students must have at least five and one-half elective credits to graduate. The study of a world language other than English or the study of a world culture may satisfy any or all of the elective requirements.

In order to enter a public four-year college or university in Washington, a student must have

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at least two years of a single foreign language. Native American languages and American Sign Language will satisfy these requirements.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill: A task force is created to inventory world language programs, curricula, materials, and professional development currently available in Washington and make recommendations on how to increase quality programs.

The task force must include representatives from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Professional Educator Standards Board, higher education, the Washington State School Directors' Association, the Washington Education Association, the Association of School Principals, and nonprofit world language organizations. Findings and recommendations must be reported to the Legislature by January 1, 2010.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 31, 2008.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: During the last session, I had my intern conduct an inventory of foreign language instruction in grades K-5 in Washington. It became very apparent that there are not very many programs in our public schools. This bill will expand an effort that has already been started. We should be preparing our students to communicate with the people in the companies in the countries that our country will be conducting business with. The Professional Educator Standards Board already is working toward improving the number of quality teachers in bilingual and world language programs in areas where there are shortages. We suggest amendments to include an inventory of all world language instruction in our schools, and to include the principals' association as a member of the task force.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Senator Pam Roach, prime sponsor; Nasue Nishida, Professional Educator Standards Board; Jerry Bender, Association of Washington Principals.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Recommended Substitute (Ways & Means): PRO: During the last session, I had my intern conduct an inventory of foreign language instruction in grades K-5 in Washington. It became very apparent that there are not very many programs in our public schools. By promoting world languages in the early grades, we are addressing a significant problem in our society. World language instruction can improve academic learning in other areas. A necessary first step is to find out where we are in world language instruction in all grade levels.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Pam Roach, prime sponsor.